



# North Carolina State Board of Education

The State Board of Education is charged with supervising and administering "the free public school system and the educational funds provided for its support."

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## sbe highlights

Notes on the state board of education...

**March 3-4, 2004**

Special Note: To review background materials on each item, please go to [/sbe\\_meetings/0403\\_sbagenda.html](#) Click on the appropriate agenda category, High Student Performance (HSP); Quality Teachers, Administrators and Staff (QP); Effective and Efficient Operations (EEO); Healthy Students in Safe, Orderly and Caring Schools (SS); or Strong Family, Community and Business Support (FCB).

### Issue Session

*Testing* — Board members continued their discussion of testing issues, agreeing that the current minimum skills competency test standard is not as rigorous as it needs to be. Members' discussion focused on a variety of options with many indicating their interest in looking at a way to use existing end-of-course tests and in re-visiting some of the original goals of the high school exit exam. Development of this exam has been suspended due to legislation. DPI staff will bring recommendations to the Board in future months.

*North Carolina in the World* — Clark Plexico, special advisor for North Carolina in the World, presented information about this initiative of the North Carolina Center for International Understanding. Under this project, education, business and policy leaders are working together to infuse international education into public schools. North Carolina in the World is developing an Action Plan for North Carolina to increase student knowledge and skills about the world. The plan, based on international, national and state research and best practices in North Carolina, will lay out a small number of achievable goals in four areas: strengthening teacher knowledge, expanding world languages, building international partnerships and strengthening higher education-school relations.

### Action Agenda

*Recommendations for Naming the Top Recognition Category for the ABCs Program (HSP 1)* — After receiving almost 3,300 responses to a survey of teachers, principals, students, parents and other educators on this issue, the Board approved Honor Schools of Excellence as the name of the new designation for the ABCs accountability model. The new category refers to schools that meet the requirements to be Schools of Excellence and that also meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under No Child Left Behind. The federal law required a recognition category to incorporate AYP.

*Recommendation from the SBE Ad Hoc Writing Committee (HSP 2)* — Results from the 10th grade writing assessment will be included in the ABCs Accountability Program beginning with the 2004-05 school year, according to actions this month. This is consistent with the Board's previous action to include results from grades four and seven in the ABCs at that time. The results will be included in the performance composite, but not the growth composite.

*Recommendations for Recognition for Alternative Schools and Programs (HSP 3)* — A plan to recognize alternative schools and alternative programs that meet high standards was approved. These schools or programs will be recognized annually at the North Carolina Association of Alternative Educators Conference.

*Presentation of 2004 Invitation to Submit Textbooks for Evaluation and Adoption in North Carolina (HSP 4)* — The textbook call letter was approved in the following subjects: science education, K-12; second languages, 6-12; English language development (ESL), K-12; and agricultural education, 7-12.

*Additional Modifications to the NC Accountability Workbook for NCLB (HSP 8)* — Recently, the US Department of Education notified North Carolina and other states of some new flexibility being allowed under No Child Left Behind, specifically in the area of students who have limited English proficiency; how to address Adequate Yearly Progress for local districts that have targeted assistance under Title I and choose to evaluate only those eligible or served in the targeted assistance program; and the 1 percent cap for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities scoring proficient against alternate standards.

Local school district interest is especially strong in the area of Limited English Proficient students. Board members approved six recommendations regarding Limited English Proficient students:

1. Continue to administer state reading and mathematics tests for LEP students who score at or above Intermediate High on the reading section of the language proficiency test during their first year in US schools. Results from these assessments will be included in the ABCs and AYP.
2. Do not require LEP students (who score below Intermediate High on the reading section of the language proficiency test) in their first year in US schools to be assessed on the reading end-of-grade tests, High School Comprehensive Test in Reading, or the NC Alternate Assessment Academic Inventory for reading.
3. For purposes of determining the 95 percent tested rule in reading, the language proficiency test from the spring administration will be used for these students.
4. Do not count mathematics results in determining AYP or ABCs performance composite scores for LEP students who score below Intermediate High on the reading section of the language proficiency test in their first year in US schools.
5. Students previously identified as LEP, who have exited LEP identification during the last two years, will be included in the calculations for determining the status of the LEP group for AYP only if that group already met the minimum number of 40 students required for a group.
6. It is a local decision whether to complete the NCAAAI for reading for first-year LEP students, but the data will not be used for ABCs or AYP purposes.

*Report on Review of the Teacher Certification Process (QP 2)* — A special provision of the 2003 budget bill requires the State Board to study and propose modifications to the North Carolina certification programs for teachers. The study report has been completed and was approved this month with findings and recommendations that include: convening a special committee to study the requirements for initial licensure with an eye to improve focus on early teacher development and support; and continuing consideration of ways to reduce paperwork and bureaucracy, incentives for local districts to participate in more rigorous licensure processes and issues of resources needed at local levels for licensure.

*Request to Begin Development of a New Test for Prospective Elementary Teachers (QP 3)* — In January, the State Board approved the recommendations from the Special Committee on Teacher Reciprocity, including the adoption of a new test for prospective elementary teachers. Based on this decision and also on input from a committee of stakeholders, the Board granted permission to the Department to begin work with National Evaluation Systems Inc. to develop this new test.

*2004-05 Supplemental Budget Request (EEO 2)* — The State Board approved its supplemental budget request which totals \$311.5 million, 5 percent of total public school funding, the maximum request amount allowed. The budget request focuses on reinstating the 2003-04 legislated budget reduction to vocational education, increased funding for children with disabilities, funds for supplemental services for poor or disadvantaged students, and funds to provide teacher assistants in K-3 and school testing facilitators at a rate of 1:1,200 students. The request also would eliminate the discretionary budget reduction of \$44 million.

*Legislative Policy Agenda* — Board members approved their 2004 SBE Legislative Policy Agenda as part of State Superintendent Mike Ward's monthly report. The policy agenda has items carried forward from the 2003 agenda, as well as new items. The new items include:

- a revision of General Statute 115C-296(a) as recommended by the Select Committee on Teacher Reciprocity Issues { "...the State Board of Education may (rather than shall) require each applicant for an initial bachelors degree certificate or graduate degree certificate to demonstrate the applicant's academic and professional preparation by achieving a prescribed minimum score on a standard examination appropriate and adequate for that purpose..." };
- a revision to provide joint authority between the State Board of Education and higher education for determining weighted credit (statutory authority currently rests with the University system);
- a revision of the statute pertaining to removal of local Board members;
- a revision of high priority schools legislation to maintain the allocation level at the amount received during the initial year unless enrollment decreases by 50 students and to revise the high priority schools list to include schools not included initially and to give high priority schools that have made high growth for three consecutive years and increased their performance composite to 80 percent or better the option to be removed from the list. If a school chooses to be removed from the list of high priority schools, the additional high priority funding for that schools will be discontinued;
- extend or remove sunset (now June 2004) on re-employment of retired teachers exempt from the post-retirement earnings cap;
- obtain permission to test in K-2 for the federal Reading First grant (would affect only about 100 schools);
- obtain special provision in budget to allow carryover of various funds; and
- provide greater financial flexibility to LEAs.

*Moore County's Appeal of Audit Exceptions (EEO4)* — The Board approved the recommendations from its subcommittee established to review an audit exception appeal by Moore County, requiring Moore County to refund the state for the \$104,370.46 audit exception.

### Discussion Items

*Recommendations of Charter Schools to Become Alternative Charter Schools (EEO 7)* — Recommendations were discussed to designate nine charter schools as Alternative Charter Schools this month. This discussion came after a thorough review to ensure that these schools met the alternative charter schools criteria established by the State Board. The schools are Crossroads, John H. Baker, Provisions Academy, Grandfather Academy, Laurinburg Charter, Laurinburg Homework, Lakeside Charter, Kennedy Charter, and Crossnore Academy.

*Annual Study of Suspensions and Expulsions, 2002-03 ( SS 1)* — Both long-term and short-term suspensions as well as expulsions continued to increase statewide in 2002-03 when compared to prior school years. The 287,810 suspensions (duplicated count) statewide in that school year totaled over 1 million instruction days for students and a significant loss of opportunity to meet educational goals. Short-term suspensions increased 7 percent and, as in past years, males, black males, American Indian students, students in grades six through nine and students receiving special education services are among the groups most disproportionately represented. Expulsions increased from 256 in 2001-02 to 381 in 2002-03. Board members expressed concern over these trends and asked for a special issues session to consider the many facts and issues around student discipline, school safety, and access to services for at-risk students.

*Promising Reform Initiatives in Career Technical Education (HSP 6)* — In light of the North Carolina College Tech Prep Strategic Plan, Cedar Ridge High School in Orange County was featured this month as a promising initiative in career technical education. Orange County's Furniture and Cabinetmaking Program has inspired numerous students to pursue related postsecondary programs in wood manufacturing, design and engineering. Students from the program benefit from having an engaging program that stretches their abilities and talents, integrates their academic and technical knowledge, develops foundational skills and creates a desire to learn and succeed.

### Special Recognition

*Superintendent of the Year* — Wake County Superintendent William R. McNeal Jr. was recognized for his recent honor as 2004 National Superintendent of the Year.

### Good News

*Communities in Schools Success* — Former Charlotte-Mecklenburg Communities in Schools' student Acton Archie was recognized for his achievements. Archie is now a senior at North Carolina State University, having reached this point against many significant and poignant personal difficulties. Archie noted that without Communities in Schools, he may not have graduated from high school and most likely would not have attended college at all. The Communities in Schools program strives to give all students five basic resources: a one-on-one relationship with a caring adult, a safe place to learn and grow, a healthy start for a healthy future, a marketable skill to use upon graduation, and a chance to give back to peers and the community.

*Greene County Schools, iTech Project* — A One-to-One Laptop Initiative for Middle and High School Students — Stephen Mazingo, superintendent of Greene County Schools, and Patricia Adams, chair of the Greene County Board of Education, described Greene County's journey toward being the "best rural school district in America." One key strategy of the district is their iTech project, which has provided each middle and high school student in the district with a laptop computer, infusing classrooms with technological tools students need for success. Thanks to a careful use of staff development, teachers have begun to integrate technology into their lessons and classroom structures, resulting in classrooms where learning is more self-directed and where the teacher serves more as a coach and mentor for student learning.

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